



# Health Technology Assessment; an Effective Tool to Reduce Medical Overuse

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## Dear Editor,

Great efforts have been made to achieve health for all and subsequently, universal health coverage. In addition, many funds have been spent on these goals. Despite these costs, the goals have not been fully achieved (1). According to recent research, one of the most important reasons for this failure is overuse (2-5).

Overuse is defined as “the provision of a service that is unlikely to increase the quality or quantity of life, that poses more harm than benefit, or that patients who were fully informed of its potential benefits and harms would not have wanted” (5). Many studies have shown that overuse is common in the health sector and leads to a decrease in quality and an increase in costs and loss of services.

Some studies have suggested a variety of tools to deal with overuse such as electronic health record (EHR), health information technologies (HIT), shared decision making (SDM), and clinical practice guidelines (CPGs).

Health technology assessment (HTA) is a multidisciplinary process that systematically examines the properties, effects, and impacts of health technology from social, economic, organizational, and ethical aspects (6). Evidence suggests that assessing health technologies has a potential role in quality improvement (7). It also plays an important role in increasing efficiency and reducing costs and loss by examining the safety, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of technologies.

Therefore, according to the definitions of overuse and HTA, many of the problems that result from the overuse can be solved through HTA programs. The emphasis on the use of HTA as a powerful tool to overcome the problems caused by overuse has been mentioned in the Lancet right care series (2-5). This is not only a lever for overcoming overuse but also a priority-setting feeder for leveraging

safe, effective, and cost-effective health care. This is an appropriate tool for priority setting and resource allocation based on the main characteristics of each (5). The contribution of patients -as key stakeholders- in health technology assessment processes is one of the issues that are being done by different countries because this will increase the strength of decisions.

HTA can improve the quality of health care services through improving the accuracy and precision of information about technologies, reducing the time needed to make decisions, collecting comprehensive and accessible evidence, reducing costs and preventing the waste of resources, increasing competition between companies producing technologies, facilitating the development of clinical guidelines, facilitating the priority setting of services and finally, introducing the most cost-effective technologies and services (7).

It is important to note that it is essential to conduct studies in different countries to demonstrate the impact of using HTA to achieve a positive effect on reducing overuse.

## Footnotes

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